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SUBJECT: Zagreb Daily Report - December 18, 2009

11. (SBU) Croatia upbeat about potential for progress at ICTY, but no activity planned until after holiday recess: Gordan Markotic, who headed the Croatian delegation to the December 16 ICTY hearing on missing documents in the Gotovina case, told us today that the atmosphere at the hearing was good and that his impression was that Croatia is making progress. Markotic noted how the prosecutor had admitted at the hearing that several categories of documents are no longer at issue, and the sides agreed to meet under court supervision to further discuss the status of documents. After today, the court is recessed until January 11. Unless today's court session amends its instructions, however, the previous ruling freezing Croatia's examination of computers and documents seized from three individuals associated with Gotovina's defense will remain in force over the recess.

12. (U) GoC arrests former high-ranking Special Police officer for obstruction of war crimes case: On December 17, prosecutors arrested former Deputy Chief of the Special Police, Zelko Sacic on charges of interfering in the investigation of war crimes committed in the village of Grubori near Knin in August, 1995. At least five other individuals, in addition to Sacic, were arrested on Thursday. In the Grubori case, prosecutors are investigating 17 members of Special Police, including five current employees of the Ministry of Interior, for the murder of five Serb civilians and arson in the village following operation "Storm." Press speculate that in addition to charges related to witness intimidation and an order to suspend the original investigation in 1995, Sacic could also be charged with command responsibility for the Grubori killings. During testimony at the ICTY in the trial of General Markac, Sacic's former commander, the ex-police coordinator for Knin, Stjepan Buhin, accused Sacic of concealing evidence in the Grubori case.

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